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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a definition of curriculum history in teacher education and differentiates it from other historical work that discusses the preparation of teachers. It utilizes research into the curriculum history, 1909-1944, of Keene Normal School/Teachers College in New Hampshire to illustrate the methodological problems and benefits of researching teacher education curriculum historically. Data were obtained from 30 years of Keene's college catalogs, focusing on program requirements, course content, and teacher educator background. Analysis of the data indicates that the metaphor for teaching and learning to teach which dominated the Keene curriculum changed from a view of teaching as a craft to that of teaching as an occupation. Three specific changes in Keene's program support this shift in vision: the shrinking role of field work in the curriculum; the rising hegemony of the academic disciplines; and the growing tendency to recruit Keene faculty with liberal arts, non-education degrees and little or no school teaching or administration experience. This case study also provides evidence of the powerful influence of society's perception of gender roles on the elementary and secondary school curriculum and consequently on the philosophies and assumptions that undergird the teacher education curriculum. (IAH)

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Curriculum History in Teacher Education: Reconstructing Programmatic Mission

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Curriculum History in Teacher Education:
Reconstructing Programmatic Mission

I would like to address three points today. First, I want to explain what I mean by curriculum history in teacher education, and to differentiate it from other historical work that discusses the preparation of teachers. Second, and for the majority of my talk, I want to describe the methodological perils and promises of researching the teacher-education curriculum historically, with reference to one of the institutions I have studied, Keene Normal School in New Hampshire. Then in a brief conclusion, I will suggest what value such historical research might hold for teacher-education policymaking today.

Now to the first question: What is teacher-education curriculum history about? In his recent landmark study, Teachers for Our Nation's Schools, John Goodlad wrote that "the education of teachers must be driven by a clear and careful conception of the educating we expect our schools to do, the conditions most conducive to this educating...and the kinds of expectations that teachers must be prepared to meet." His work focusses on questions of curriculum content and purposefulness, not only behind the ed-school classroom door, but in teacher education's programmatic and structural relationships to schools and practitioners.

This points to a problem, and a challenge, for curriculum historians. We know very little about the values orientations of the teacher-education enterprise over time. While national surveys of American teacher education have been few and far between

to begin with, Goodlad's appears to be the first case-study-based research in which the values orientation of the curriculum has been studied directly and reported-on extensively. We do, of course, have a small but excellent shelf of teacher-education studies that are essentially **institutional** histories (either individual, or about categories). This scholarship covers such topics as the evolution of degree structures and programs, changing student constituencies and the various roles of normal-school and state-college education programs in different regions and times, the political and economic status of teacher education in universities, issues of state regulation, and the regional and national influences of such flagship institutions as Columbia Teachers College and the University of Chicago.

Now to the second question: If we wanted to know what teacher candidates actually studied, how and why they studied it, and what orientations or biases their professors might have brought to the curriculum, where would we turn? With how much certainty could we assert, or infer, the kinds of readings and assignments students engaged in, what values orientations characterized their curricula, and what, as graduates, they might have had an opportunity to know, value, and be able to do?

I will respond to these questions by intermingling data I obtained from part my research into the Keene Normal School/Teachers College curriculum, covering the period 1909-1944, with notes about the ups and downs of my methods and sources. The methodological problems of this work are substantial, but,

depending upon the particular case study and available resources, not at all unresolvable. If we want to gain an ever-improving understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of how teachers taught -- that "Deweyan" versus "administrative" progressive continuum explained by Tyack and Lagemann and investigated so carefully by Cuban -- we can and should conduct a parallel investigation into **how teachers were taught to teach.** No study of the curriculum history of teacher education can stand apart from an inquiry into the history of the education professoriate, i.e., **who** taught our teachers; such an inquiry is both logical and possible to carry out in the context of an institutional curriculum case history.

For better and worse, we begin with school catalogues. Catalogues surely are dubious sources, especially as, over the decades, for reasons of money-saving, academic freedom, programatic incoherence, and others, they have perhaps become less reliable windows into what occurred in classrooms than, in at least some earlier places and times, they appear once to have been. Catalogues remain, however, one potentially valuable window through which to view curriculum structure and content. Keene Normal School/Teachers College offered an interesting opportunity to do so.

Here is a table of data constructed from 30 years of catalogues and related sources about the program requirements and course content of Keene's program for elementary teacher candidates. Let me place the table before you, and then define

its terms and discuss its genesis and meaning.

Changes in Program Priorities as Indicated by Approximate Percentages of Course Credits in Five Categories for Elementary Teacher Candidates Keene Normal School/Teachers College

Category of Course Work	1915-1916 (2-yr. N.S.)	1923-1924 (2-yr. N.S.)	1933-1934 (3-yr. N.S.)	1942-1944 (4-yr. T.C.)
Educational Foundations *(inc. Intro to Ed.;Ed.Psych; Rural Soc.)*	12%	15%	15%	10%
Subject-Fields *(sciences; social sci.; humanities; music & art appreciation)*	15%	25%	55%	55%
Hands-On *(manual and domestic arts; activity-based music & art)*	40%	35%	15%	10%
Practice *(Stu. teach. & pre-st.teach. field work)*	33%	25%	15%	15%
Other *(p.e.;health; handwriting; etc.)*	* *(Less than 5%; other #s rounded up)*	*	*	10%

Without reference to the backup materials which explained the parameters of these courses and the backgrounds of the professors who taught them, these are largely just numbers out of context. But my point in charting these changes over time was to help me interpret incremental changes in Keene's programmatic mission that were evident to me as I studied the available documents. I assembled and summarized the data for the specified time periods shown, and not for subsequent years, for two reasons. First, the amount of explanatory detail in the Keene catalogues about each course and each professor's educational and professional past was, (a) much more substantial, and (b) much more evidently revised and updated during Keene's first thirty-five years, compared to the post-World War II catalogues which restricted faculty descriptions to places and dates of degrees, and offered what appeared to be increasingly generic, shorter, and infrequently-updated course descriptions. Second, once the transition occurred from two to three year normal school and then to four-year teachers college, so too the philosophic and programmatic transition had occurred from craft school to college.

What I find intriguing about these data is both how much and how little it tells us about matters of mission and philosophy, both on the Keene campus and in the surrounding rural New Hampshire school districts. It isn't possible here to discuss the full background and content of the Keene case, but I would like to choose just two themes for elaboration, in the hope of illustrating methodological problems and prospects in this type of inquiry.

First, I would like to explore the theme of **changing metaphors for teaching and learning to teach** that the Keene curriculum represented over time. Keene evolved from a clear notion of teaching as a craft learned by gradual field orientation and apprenticeship, and what you might call "applied academics," to a considerably less clear notion of teaching as an occupation prepared-for, if not exactly "learned," by keeping a few years ahead of the children in academic knowledge and trying your hand at teaching in the end. The metaphor of profession never really described Keene's vision of **teaching** and **learning to teach** during this period, though if I had more time, I could argue that they flirted with the idea to a greater degree in the early days than in the latter ones.

Three sets of data particularly support this decline-of-craft conclusion.

First and most obvious is the shrinking role of field work in the curriculum. Initially a centerpiece in Keene's vision for preparing teachers, field work sank in both "market share" and actual clock-hours, both from the 1910s to the 1920s and again from the 1920s to the 1930s. The slide in clock-hours was slightly reversed by the 1940s, but, then as a newly-designated Teachers College, Keene kept field work's market share at less than half what it had been at the Normal School's founding.

A second data column shows the rising hegemony of the academic disciplines, at Keene and at teachers colleges nationwide, by the 1930s -- and Keene Normal School was relatively late in this

regard, having reached only its twentieth birthday by 1929. Not immediately evident, however, is the curricular orientation and professors' backgrounds hidden behind the identical 55% market share figures for the 1930s and the 1940s. In his 1989 essay in the American Teachers volume, Bill Johnson questioned the popular notion that normal schools gradually abandoned their "practical" (or what I am calling "craft-oriented") approach to the school subjects in favor of a more traditional collegiate one. He suggested that the general-studies component may not typically have offered any distinct craft orientation, and that its evolution was not one of type (craft to academic) but only of quantity and level (from secondary school or remedial to college). New Hampshire documents during this period, however, do offer substantial evidence of both kinds of evolutionary changes. Checking the State Department of Education's 1933 Circular on teacher education programs for descriptions of all those general-studies courses required of elementary teacher candidates, virtually all pointed to the introduction of sample learning activities, or more generally, "teaching and learning problems" inherent in the subject, as one of three course objectives. (Others typically were the mastery of material required for elementary children in the state curriculum, and a broad introduction to the field.) Furthermore, a third set of data, largely from the faculty-biographical-sketch section of the catalogues, show that it was not until principal Wallace Mason first organized Keene's faculty into subject-field departments in 1926 that he began to recruit primarily secondary-school-oriented

subject-field specialists as faculty. During Keene's first two decades, virtually every instructor brought teaching and often administrative experience in elementary schools to their campus positions; many also held normal-school degrees. By 1942, however, more than half the faculty held liberal arts or non-Education university degrees, and only one-sixth had ever taught or administered in an elementary school. Not surprisingly, the curriculum section of the 1942 Keene catalogue, in a general discussion under the heading "Teachers Colleges," declared that course content differed only "somewhat [from that in] the liberal arts college." Subject-field instruction was labelled "on the collegiate level (though) vocational in **attitude**." Keene's college historian, James Smart, attempted to learn how much craft remained in the early-1940s general curriculum when he interviewed several elementary-teacher alumnae of the period for a book he wrote in the 1980s. Although the data lack statistical validity, the alums described dry academic survey courses taught lecture-style and out of textbooks; they considered them minimally enlightening as content courses and bereft of pedagogical insight for prospective elementary teachers.

Two potentially contradictory pieces of evidence did emerge from the catalogue study, however. Between 1923 and 1933, the science requirement increased by 50%, and then by another two-thirds between 1933 and 1942. Keene's founding-period science trademark, "Nature Study," retained a prominent role throughout this period, holding its own with respect to General Science or any

discipline-specific courses. Although the evident child-centered, rural, and hands-on orientation of Keene's original nature courses may have faded in favor of lecture and textbook, it is interesting that the course in some form remained central to elementary education requirements. Similarly, while arts requirements grew 50% through the 1930s and another third by 1942, studio art, sight reading and basic composition in music, and choral conducting, continued to comprise about half the arts requirements, maintaining a solid presence against the "appreciation" category of courses. Courses in nature studies and the performing arts seemed to be the last holdouts of the more craft-oriented general studies courses in Keene's preparation of elementary teachers.

To the extent that these puzzle-pieces suggest a pattern, and despite the relatively sketchy evidence about what specific assignments students tackled in these courses, Keene indeed appears to have built its initial faculty and program around a notion of craft, but then changed first the field emphasis and later the bulk of the course work to what one might call "generic studies." Furthermore, the research methodology, at least in this case, seems to have taken us reasonably far down the road to understanding how one institution transformed not just the credit requirements, but the substance and orientation, of its curriculum and the people who taught it over a 35-year period.

Now I would like to turn very briefly to a second theme embedded in the data, and it is the Ellen Lagemann's "Dewey versus

Thorndike" question that Larry Cuban has done so much to illuminate for us in the history of elementary and secondary curriculum and pedagogy. Although the table offers several data categories we could discuss in this regard, for now I would like to choose just one, the "Hands-On" course category.

At first glance, it seems tempting to say that teacher training at Keene demonstrated John Dewey's initial popularity but rapid decline. Dewey's integration of head and hand often utilized the manual and domestic arts -- in particular cooking, sewing, and constructing -- as vehicles for learning math, history, science, and reading. Manual and domestic courses alone comprised 15% of the curriculum in Keene's founding period, with course work required every semester. By 1942, that requirement dropped by two-thirds. Why did Keene students study these courses initially, and why did they stop? Was it the eventual victory of mass education principles over child-centered progressivism? The catalogues offered <u>some</u> insight here, but other documentary evidence proved more telling.

The long and short of it is that Deweyan progressive philosophies had virtually nothing to do with either the onset or the decline of manual and domestic courses at Keene. Prior to New Hampshire's designation of a junior-high school structure and curriculum after 1916, and the resulting changes in Normal School offerings, one of the stated purposes of manual training was to prepare elementary teachers to work with sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students whose state-mandated curricula called for shop to

teach things "that a boy should be able to do at home," and cooking and sewing for girls "to establish habits of neatness, accuracy, thoroughness, etc." and "to develop an appreciation of beauty through simplicity, utility, and suitability that will find concrete expression in dress, school and home." Gender roles that were most widely accepted in society, rather than Progressive Era educational philosophy, clearly drove these curricula.

The case of Keene's manual and domestic arts presents a good example of how curriculum historians might go back and forth between school district records and university records to understand a curricular phenomenon. It turns out that the City of Keene Board of Education appointed three male citizens to a curriculum committee in 1911 on "the introduction of manual training" in the district. The committee advanced an essentially three-part rationale for a manual component in the curriculum. First, they said, mothers and fathers were not engaging in as much home training in the respective male and female arts as they once did, which they found an unfortunate loss, besides which there remained a strong job market for boys with manual skills. (What parallel market remained for girls' domestic skills did not enter into the argument.) Second, they asserted that "The foundation principle of all society is that labor is uplifting..." and they wanted to teach the value of hard and hands-on work. This desire to uplift labor and craft work meshed with what annual city and town reports for neighboring communities showed about regional employment demographics of the time. The curriculum committee did

make some Deweyan-like observations about the potential for thematic and integrated curricula in the primary grades, such as having children build models of early-civilization settlements and early stone tools, "heat water by immersing hot stones," and other activities reminiscent of history and science at Dewey's lab school. However, this particular rationale did not stick in the Superintendent's mind when, in 1912, he reported to the Board that the new manual curriculum consisted of all boys above the fifth grade spending one weekly lesson at their work benches while the girls sewed. New Hampshire followed a similar pattern when it established gender-specific manual courses in the new junior-high curricula in 1916. Suffice it to say that little evidence of any Deweyan thought appeared in any course descriptions or lists of requirements for these courses. What <u>is</u> evident is the overriding influence of society's gender roles on the elementary and secondary curriculum, and consequently on the philosophies and assumptions upon which the teacher-education curriculum was built.

This process of measuring course offerings and requirements against philosophies and assumptions worked well in the Keene case study by making college catalogues one centerpiece of the research. Such research can take curriculum historians in at least two directions, one focussing on an institution's internal evolution over time with respect to the interplay of pedagogical <u>ideals</u> and <u>practices</u>, and the other attending to the social historical context in which teaching and teacher education developed.

I have promised a comment on the relevance of any of this to teacher-education policymaking today. As the Goodlad report amply documents, we in schools of education have typically set our teacher candidates adrift in a sea of unfocussed and disconnected requirements that may be described either as non-values-driven, or, by default or malevolence (but mostly default), driven by values of professional and societal stability and conservatism. Curriculum histories of our enterprise offer the possibility of perspective about when, where, and how institutions have succeeded or failed to build ideas-driven programs. There are even good and contemporary ideas to be found; this is not all a depressing business. Furthermore, the process of researching past curricula suggests frameworks we can use critically to examine what we now teach and why we teach it. Do our programs have missions, or merely distribution requirements?